

THE BUSINESS MINISTER— Another Adventure of Dr. Fortune, by H. C. Bailey

"O Lord, no! Nobody ever heard of him out of his department, and there they all hate him. But he's the sort of fellow I can't stand."

"Poor devil," Reggie murmured again.

He would be so sympathetic when you've met him," Lomas said. A slip of paper was presented to him. "That's his name," he said, "and he was leaving me alone too long. Well, we've got something for him to-day."

Mr. Kimball looked a heavy fellow, with the bulk of his head and neck supported on a sturdy frame. But he had the vivacity of movement and a keenness of expression which made them uncomfortable. Yet he was not a cruel man, and his cruelest critics were always those who had not met him. For the rest, he was a kindly, useful, neatness in his clothes, and succeeded.

He rushed in "Well, Lomas, anything new? And he flung himself at a chair."

"I have just been discussing it with Mr. Fortune," replied Lomas.

"What do you think?" he asked Reggie. "What do you make of it?"

"I don't wonder you find it harassing," Reggie said.

"Harassing! I've lost more sleep over it than I want to think about," said Reggie.

"Doctor, aren't you?" he laughed ruefully. "I'm not a case, you know."

He recognized for the professional instinct, Reggie said. "But you ought to see your doctor, sir."

"Don't do that," said Kimball, sharply, and dragged his hand away.

"Kimball, don't," said Reggie, "thanks, Lomas, nothing, nothing. I never touch spirits. I'll be all right in a moment."

"I don't know how to find I've got to believe it was Sandford," he struggled out of his chair, and went to the window, and stood up and dabbed at his forehead. He stood there a moment in the raw air, took a pinch of snuff, and then he came back.

"There's no doubt about this evidence, eh? We can't get away from it," he said.

"I don't know," said Reggie, "Sandford for an explanation," said Lomas.

"Most unpleasant thing I ever did in my life," said Reggie.

"I don't do a perfectly good explanation. I've always found him quite straight—and very efficient. You gentlemen don't seem to be glad to see him here. They passed an awkward five minutes till Sandford came."

HE looked a good young man. He was rather small, he was very lean, he wore eyeglasses. He was a little nervous, and restrained. He made graded salutations to Kimball, his chief, and to Lomas. He looked at Reggie and Supt. Bell as though he expected them to retreat from his presence. And he turned upon Kimball a glance that bade him lose no time.

Kimball seemed to find some difficulty in beginning. "I don't know if you guess why I sent for you," he broke out.

"I guess that it is on this matter of the gamble in coal shares," said Sandford, precisely.

"I don't know anything. I want you to explain. It's been brought to my knowledge that yesterday three hundred thousand in notes was paid into your account. Where did it come from?"

Sandford took off his eyeglasses and looked at them and put them on again. "I have no information," he said in the most correct official manner he could find. "I don't know what you have been correctly informed."

"There's no doubt of the fact, Mr. Sandford," said Lomas gloomily.

"I don't know," he said, "I can say that no one has any authority to make payments into my account. As far as I know, I have nothing to do with it. I suppose you have found out who did."

"I repeat, sir, give me his name, you see. Can you tell us who he was?" Lomas asked.

"I repeat, sir, I know nothing about the transaction."

"And that's all you say?"

"I need hardly add that I shall not do the same."

"You know the matter can't end there," Kimball cried. "Come, man, you're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."

"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money was the result."

"I say again, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I should hope that the department would be able to get the influence upon any one who knows my character and my career."


"Good God, man, we're dealing with facts. You know three thousand pounds come from?"

"I have no information. I have no idea."

Kimball started up. "You make it impossible to do anything for you. You're not doing yourself justice. No one could have supplied you with this tone, can't you see that?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I do not see how I could have anything to do with it. I spoke of making a charge. Will you be so good as to state it?"

"I don't know," he said. "This boom was begun on information which only you had beside myself. And immediately after the boom this large amount of money was paid into your account. You must see what everybody will say—that you sold the plan, and this money



HERBERT MURRAY.

"SPENT A GOOD DEAL AT HIS TAILORS," SAID E

everything in his car that would open and told the chauffeur to drive round Regent's Park. "Come on, Bell. The rain won't hurt you."

"I don't wonder you want a blow. Poor chap! As ugly a mess as ever I saw."

"What I want in muffins," said Reggie, "several muffins and a little tea and my domestic hearth. Then I'll feel safe."

He spread himself out before his study fire and contrived to eat and drink with freedom.

"In another world, Bell," he said, dreamily, "in another and a gay world it seems to me you wanted to know the cause of death. It's quite a plain case."

"Is it, indeed, sir? You surprise me."

"The dead man was killed by a blow on the left temple, from some heavy, blunt weapon—a stick, a poker. At the same time, or immediately after death, his face was battered in by the same or a similar weapon. Death occurred some days ago. After death, but not long after death, the body received other injuries, a broken rib and left shoulder blade, probably by a fall from some height. That's the medical evidence. There are other curious circumstances."

"Can't a few?" said Bell, with a grim chuckle. "You're very definite, sir, if I might say so. I suppose he couldn't have been killed and had his face smashed like—like he did—by the fall?"

"You can cut that right out. He was killed by a blow and blows smashed his face in. Where did you find him?"

"Men of the snow found when the snow melted this morning in the well at Montmorency House."

"Under the snow?" That puts the murder on the night of the 15th. Yes, that fits. I saw him just as he was found?"

Bell nodded.

"HE was fully dressed—collar and tie, boots. But a lot of his internal buttons were undone. And there's not a name, not even a maker name, on any of his clothes. His linen's new and don't show a laundry mark. Somebody took a lot of pains to make it look like the beggar's clothes were changed after he was killed. That must have been a grievous business too. He's not a tender-hearted fellow who did this job. Valet the body you've killed and then bash its face in. Well, well! Have some more tea."

"Not me," said Bell, with a gulp. Together they went off to Montmorency House.

"How would you describe deceased, sir?" said Bell.

"Men of about fifty, under middle height, inclined to be stout, unusually bald."

"Can't much to go by, is it?" Bell sighed. "We don't so much as know if he was clean-shaved or not."

"He was, I think. I saw no trace of facial hair. But he might have been shaved after he was killed. He'd had an operation, by the way, on the ear. But I wouldn't say anything about him just yet."

At Montmorency House detectives were already busy with the porter, and had done the obvious things. The body, it was to be presumed, had fallen from one of the windows opening on the well. The men who had flats round the well were all accounted for, save one, Mr. Rand, tenant of a flat on the top story, who had not been seen for some days.

Supt. Bell's subordinate in charge of the inquiries reported that Rand seemed to have been a mysterious chap—only had his flat a few weeks, not used it regularly, not by any means; no visitors to speak of. "He was a queer one, was he?" said Bell, and looked at Reggie.

"What was he like?" said Reggie.

"Middle size, to bigish, wore glasses, well dressed, brown hair, which he wore rather long, they say."

"That's put the lid on," said Bell. "Won't do for the corpse, Warren. Not a bit like it. Well, since where are we now?"

He turned to Reggie.

"You will go so fast," Reggie complained, and sat down. "I'm panting after you in vain. What's the primary hypothesis, Bell?"

"Sir?"

"We assume the corpse is Rand, or that Rand chucked the corpse out of the window?"

"Ah, there's that," said the inspector eagerly. "We hadn't worked on that."

"We haven't worked on anything. If you ask me," said Bell gloomily.

"We'll get on, if you please," said Reggie. "Because Rand's away, it doesn't follow that Rand's the corpse. It might have come out of some other tenant's window. Know anything about the other tenants?"

"All most respectable, sir," said the inspector.

"My dear man, the whole affair is most respectable. I dare say we'll find the corpse was a conveyancer murdered by a civil servant. A crime of quiet, middle-class taste. What sort of fellows are the other fellows?"

"Well, sir, there's a retired engineer, and a young chap, just married, in the Kimington firm, and a naval officer, and several young doctors with consulting rooms in Harley street, and one of the Maynards, the Devonshire family. That's all with any rooms on the well."

"They don't sound as if they would fit," said Reggie. "None of them heard anything?"

"No, sir, that's queer, to be sure."

"It happened the night of the blizzard. You wouldn't have noticed a bomb, well, who was Rand?"

"That's what no one knows, sir. He'd only been here a few weeks. They're service flats, you know, and furnished. He gave a banker's reference. Bank says he has no money reason to be missing. Quiet, stable account. Income from investments. Balance three hundred odd. But the bank don't know anything about him. He had an account for years. He used to live off Jermyn street apartment house. The landlady died last year."

"And the landlady died last year," Reggie repeated. "He's elusive, is Mr. Rand. Same like our corpse. But is Reggie missing, Bell?"

"He's not been seen for a few days. There's not much in that. He never used to live off Jermyn street apartment house. The landlady died last year."

"And so far as we know, deceased isn't Rand."

"Well, don't know quite as far as that," said Reggie.

"Good Lord, the porter who found him didn't recognize the body," said Reggie.

"Remember his face."

"My God, don't talk about his face!"

"Sorry, sorry. Well, I dare say the porter was upset, too."

"Yes, but the porter said Rand was bigish, and the body's on the small side. The porter said he had a lot of hair, and the body's absolutely bald."

"My dear chap, give a man a straight back and a bit of moustache and lots of fellows think he's bigish—while he's alive. And a man that's absolutely bald is just the man to wear a wig."

"I thought we were to go by facts," Bell said gloomily.

"And so we are, Bell. Just a-going to begin. No rash haste. Let's get on. I want to call on the elusive Mr. Rand."

There was nothing individual about the rooms of Mr. Rand. He had been content with the furniture supplied by the owners of the place. Reggie turned to the manager of the flats.

"Suppose there's nothing in the place Mr. Rand owns?"

"There is nothing of the tenant's personal property except his clothes."

"He is elusive, our friend Rand?" Reggie murmured, wandering about the room. "Smoked rather a shag, did he?"

"Don't apostrophize. Do the servants come here every day?"

The manager was embarrassed.

"Well, my dear sir, they come just now. Not unless they're rung for. Not unless we know the tenant's using the room, too."

"Don't apologize, don't apologize. In point of fact, they haven't been here since"—he looked grimly at the door—"since when?"

"I should say some days," said the manager, with diffidence.

"I should say a week. No matter. Many thanks."

SUPT. BELL with some urgency ushered the manager out. When he had done that he turned upon his inspector.

"Confound you, Warren, what do you want to stare at the waste-paper basket for? That chap would have seen it if Mr. Fortune hadn't got interested in the smokes and drinks."

Reggie laughed and the inspector abashed himself. "Very sorry, sir. Didn't know I stared. But it is so blooming odd."

Bell snorted and lifted the basket onto the table. It was nearly full of black, burnt paper. "Why did they burn it in the basket?" said the inspector.

"Because the fireplaces are all gas

BELL, LOOKING INTO A WELL-FILLED WARDROBE.

stoves, I suppose," said Bell. "But I don't know why they couldn't leave the stuff on the hearth."

"Because this is a tidy crime," said Reggie. "Nice, quiet, middle-class crime. No ugly mess. I feel the kind of man that did it. Don't you? I'll lay you odds he came of a neat, virtuous, middle-class home."

"I'm only feeling what I can feel," the superintendent began to examine the burned paper. "Letters mostly. Some stuff looks a bit like a notebook. That's all we'll get out of that."

"Well, except the one thing. Whoever did that was cleaning up traces that might have been dangerous. Same like he cleared up the dead man's face. Somebody and some affair had to be absolutely abolished."

"Yes. What was it?"

"We mayn't ever know that," said Reggie, slowly.

"I believe you," said Bell, and laughed. "I feel that, sir."

The inspector and he began to examine the room in detail, opening drawers and cupboards. But except for tobacco and spirits, they found no trace of Mr. Rand. Nothing had been broken open, but nothing was locked. "No keys on the deceased, were there, Mr. Fortune?" said suddenly. "A few few men go about without any keys."

"Well, hang it, very few men go about without any money," Reggie expostulated. "The corpse hadn't a copper. You can take it the way we found him, and the way he used to go about. He'd do his vest up, for instance."

"That's right, sir. Well, now, these facts of yours. There's no papers anywhere. All burnt in that basket. Rather odd there is not so much as a book."

"I don't think he was a man of culture, the elusive Rand. But you've missed something, haven't you?"

"I dare say," Bell grinned. "I generally do when you're about."

"There's not a sign the murder was done in this room."

"Oh, I saw that all right. But we hadn't any reason to think it was."

"Wasn't it out on the bed?"

"So tidy." And they went into Mr. Rand's bedroom.

That, also, was tidy. No trace of a struggle, of any kind. The bed had no papers or books, nothing personal but clothes.

"Spent a good deal at his tailor's," said Bell, looking into a well-filled wardrobe. "Hello. They're not all the same make. Some cheaper stuff. Why, what's the matter with his boots, sir?" For Reggie was taking up one pair after another.

"Quite satisfactory. Reggie murmured. "About a nine, and rather broad. The corpse wore about nine, and had a broad foot. What's that about his clothes? Different tailors? Are the clothes all the same size. All made for the same man? Suit after suit?"

"Provident fellow, is he? Well, they were to the same measure; they all were marked W. H. Rand."

"Quite satisfactory," Reggie purred. "They'd fit the corpse all right. Pretty different styles, though. He dressed to look different."

"That's what W. H. Rand. They began to open drawers. There was the same abundance, the same variety of styles in And that's his bowery. "Yes, he meant to be elusive," Reggie murmured. "Anything from a bookmaker to a church warden at a funeral. Sixteen and one-half collars, though. And that's the measure of the corpse. Is all the linen marked W. H. Rand?"

"It was, and with ink. If the corpse is Rand, where the devil did his shirt come from? All right, Reggie. The slayer unlicked the name from his coat. But the shirt? Did the slayer bring a change of linen with him? Suppose he knew something. But what did he know?"

Reggie was putting on his overcoat. He collected his envelope and his cigarette box, looking the while with dreamy eyes at Supt. Bell. "You're a good fellow, that you are, with unknown quantities about just now. Who the devil was Rand? Will you ring for the lift, please?"

When he was left alone with Bell he

was killed wouldn't look nice now."

"That about settles it," Bell said, slowly.

"We haven't seen the bathroom," said Reggie.

It was a bathroom of some size but no luxury. Only the sheer necessities of bathing were provided. The lower half of the wall was tiled, the floor of linoleum. Reggie stopped in the doorway. "Anything strike you about it, Bell?"

"Looks new, sir."

"Yes. Nice and clean. Tidy, don't you know. But there's no towels and no sponge. Yet in the bedroom everything was ready for Rand to sleep there tonight—pajamas, brushes and comb, everything. Didn't he use towels? Didn't he have a sponge?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"This is where the slayer cleaned up after the murder. And he took the dirty towels and the bloody sponge away with him. Just wait, will you?" And he went into the bathroom on all fours. About the middle of the room he stopped and pored over the linoleum, and felt it with the tips of his fingers. Then he stood up and went to the window, opened it, and looked out. He examined the sill, and then sat himself on it in the manner of a window cleaner, and began to study the window frame. He pulled out a pocket knife, and, with great care, cut a piece of wood. He put this down on the edge of the porcelain basin and resumed his study. When he had finished, he went down again on his hands and knees. He lay down on his stomach and stretched underneath the bed. He felt about for a while, and in his hand something that glittered. He held it out on his palm to Bell.

"What's this, sir? A match box?"

"It might be. A gold match box, provisionally. No name. No initials. On opening—we find inside—a little white powder—he smelled it, put a fragment on the tip of his finger and tasted—which is cocaine. Well, come in, Bell, come in. See what you can make of the place. I can't find a finger print anywhere." He slipped the gold box into his pocket and went out. The detectives came in and went over the room even more minutely than he. "There's nothing," said Bell.

REGGIE sat on the edge of the bath.

"Well well. Some things we do know. The dead man is Rand, the elusive Rand. He had papers worth burning. He was killed by a powerful man with one or two blows. After death he was stripped and dressed in the unmarked clothes, probably here. His body was brought where a mess could be cleaned up, to have the face smashed in. You can see the dents in the linoleum where his head lay. And then he was pitched out by that window. There's a bit of animal matter, probably human tissue, on that scrap of wood. Then the slayer packed up everything that was broken glass. The slayer was the tidy slayer of the elusive Rand—one of 'em used cocaine."

Supt. Bell shrugged his shoulders. "What I should call a baffling case. I mean to say we don't seem to get near anybody."

"The slayer, though, got off the bath, and went back to the sitting room. There he tumbled Mr. Rand's cigarettes out of their box, and put his bit of wood in it."

"I suppose there's nothing more here," he murmured, his eyes wandering round the room. "Try it with the lights on. Ah, what's that? He went to the gas fire and picked out of its tumps of sham coal a scrap of gleaming metal. The next moment he was down on his knees, pulling out of it pieces of—"Give me an envelope, will you?" he said over his shoulder, and they saw he was collecting scraps of broken glass.

"What is it, sir?"

"That's the bridge of a pair of rimless eyeglasses. And if we're lucky we can reconstruct the lenses. When Rand was hit his glasses jumped off his nose. He was wearing a pair of the fourth thing the slayer didn't think of."

"You don't miss much, Mr. Fortune. Still it is baffling, very baffling. What was Rand, would you say? It was worth somebody's while to bring in, I suppose he knew something. But what did he know?"

Reggie was putting on his overcoat. He collected his envelope and his cigarette box, looking the while with dreamy eyes at Supt. Bell. "You're a good fellow, that you are, with unknown quantities about just now. Who the devil was Rand? Will you ring for the lift, please?"

When he was left alone with Bell he

[illegible]